

## VAGRANCY IN THE VICTORIAN AGE

Vagrants were everywhere in Victorian culture. They wandered through novels and newspapers, photographs, poems and periodicals, oil paintings and illustrations. They appeared in a variety of forms in a variety of places: ‘Gypsies’ and hawkers tramped the country, casual paupers and loafers lingered in the city, and vagabonds and beach-combers roved the colonial frontiers.

Uncovering the rich Victorian taxonomy of nineteenth-century vagrancy for the first time, this interdisciplinary study examines how assumptions about class, gender, race and environment shaped a series of distinct vagrant types. At the same time it broaches new ground by demonstrating that rural and urban conceptions of vagrancy were repurposed in colonial contexts. Representational strategies circulated globally as well as locally and were used to articulate shifting fantasies and anxieties about mobility, poverty and homelessness. These are traced through an extensive corpus of canonical, ephemeral and popular texts as well as a variety of visual forms.

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*Representing the Wandering Poor in Nineteenth-Century  
Literature and Culture*

ALISTAIR ROBINSON

*Birkbeck, University of London*



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For my parents,  
Andrew and Alison

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